

[Julia Lewis](https://www.kbtx.com/2024/04/17/state-texas-is-being-fined-100000-over-its-foster-care-failures/), The state of Texas is being fined \$100,000 over its foster care failures, KBTX 3 (Apr. 16, 2024) <https://www.kbtx.com/2024/04/17/state-texas-is-being-fined-100000-over-its-foster-care-failures/>

### **The state of Texas is being fined \$100,000 over its foster care failures**

U.S. District Judge Janis Jack found Texas Health and Human Services in contempt of court orders to fix how the state investigates complaints by children in its care.

BRYAN, Texas (KBTX) - A federal judge is fining the state of Texas \$100,000 every day over its failures with the foster care system.

This is the third time the state of Texas has been held in contempt of court orders since a 2011 lawsuit about foster care conditions in the care of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

U.S. District Judge Janis Jack found Texas Health and Human Services in contempt of court orders to fix how the state investigates complaints by children in its care.

Texas Health and Human Services will pay roughly \$3.1 million in fines each month until Texas can demonstrate it complies with the court order.

KBTX spoke with [Renaissance Family Services of Texas](#), an agency that works to place foster children with families. The Executive Director, Gary Jeter, says they're frustrated.

"It's anger because it's still going on. There's been so much effort and so much exposure to change the system so that first of all, children were protected, and secondly, there was accountability in reporting and stuff," said Jeter. "You would think one time would be enough to get the attention and that they could identify what exactly they are missing. So I hope they can get it together, for their sake, for all of our sakes, for the children's sake."

Jeter says at least in the Brazos Valley, he's seen the changes from health and human services doubling down on regulations.

"Maybe it would be two homes a month that were randomly sampled but it seems like it's now three or four more homes that are randomly sampled by licensing. Definitely on contractual obligations, seen an increase in monitoring from contracts. And then of course the trainings themselves seeing a difference in several new developed trainings around recognizing reporting sexual abuse as well as suicide awareness," said Jeter.

Jeter says every child should always be placed in an environment that lets them thrive and not have fear.

"It gets my gore, it really makes me angry that there's any child, it's bad enough that there's children out there being abused by their parents and others, it's even worse in my opinion when it's by someone like a foster parent or a kinship or staff member in a facility not doing their job to protect the child," said Jeter.

KBTX spoke with a former foster parent in the Brazos Valley. Bethany Owens was a foster mom of seven children and she says the biggest problem she's faced with the Texas foster care system is employee turnover rate. When she was fostering, she would see one child be assigned to several case workers throughout their time in the system. She said when that happens, part of the child's story gets lost along the way.

[Voices For Children](#), a non-profit child advocacy organization, says the ultimate goal is to get children into safe homes.

“The state is not set up to be a parent. It’s not ideal for kids to be in CPS care when they need to be and when the state intervenes. You know, everybody wants kids to be safe, everybody wants healthy families. How do we get families to a place where they can provide a safe, stable home for their kids,” said Amy Faulkner, the Executive Director of Voices For Children.

Faulkner says if you want to help, get involved.

“Get involved, be aware, you know all adults in the state of Texas are mandatory reporters. If you see something and you’re concerned about that child, about their safety, report that to child protective services, let them investigate that,” said Faulkner.

We reached out to Texas Health and Human Services who told us via email they are reviewing the 427-page order and its attachments given by Judge Jack.